

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the careful examination of the application. However, in view of the foregoing amendments and the remarks that follow, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections.

All of the claims, claims 1-13, have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 98/27904, hereinafter Lynard, in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,685,909, hereinafter Berg.

Lynard has been discussed in detail in the Response filed on February 20, 2003. Familiarity with the description of Lynard is assumed. In summary, the Examiner's attention is directed to the portion of the description when indicates that the bonds disclosed in Lynard are not the same as the laminate bonding locations according to the present invention. Specifically, in contrast to the present invention bonding locations, liquid is not substantially transported through the bonding areas 52 of Lynard. For example, the Examiner's attention is directed to Figure 1 of Lynard, wherein it is illustrated that there are no bonding locations in the area that is intended as the primary wetting region. Instead, the bonding locations are arranged outside the primary wetting region.

To further distinguish claim 1 over the cited prior art, claim 1 has been amended to indicate that the laminate bonding locations extend at least throughout an area of the absorbent article that is arranged so as to receive a major part of body liquid to be

absorbed by the absorbent article. For support for the amendment, the Examiner's attention is directed to the top of page 32 of the specification, as well as Figure 8.

In view of the effect that the bonding locations have on liquid transport, it is clear that the present invention, which, among other things, includes the laminate bonding locations extending throughout the region of the absorbent article that is intended to receive a major part or body liquid, the laminate bonding locations facilitate guiding liquid towards the liquid transfer sheet. Such concept is the opposite of that taught or suggested by Lynard. The Examiner's reliance upon Berg is limited to its teaching of the superabsorbent material. Accordingly, Berg does not overcome the deficiency of Lynard with respect to the claims of the present application.

Accordingly, claim 1, as now amended, is clearly patentable over the cited prior art.

The remaining claims, 2-13 depend from claim 1, and are thus also patentable over the cited prior art, at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1.

In view of the positions taken herein, it is not necessary to address the propriety of the combination of Lynard and Berg as set forth in the outstanding Office Action. However, Applicants reserve the right to challenge the Examiner's interpretation of Berg, or the motivation to combine Lynard and Berg, at a later time if necessary and appropriate.

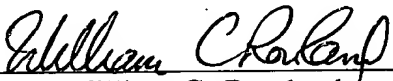
Accordingly, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections.

In the event that there are any questions concerning this Amendment, or the application in general, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned attorney so that prosecution of the application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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